

CRASC Technical Committee Meeting Minutes
Turners Falls, MA
November 7, 2005

1. Call to Order and Approval of Minutes from the Last Meeting

Chair Jay McMenemy called the meeting to order at 10:05 a.m. and adjourned at 2:26 p.m. Mr. Steve Roy, USFS, and Mr. David MacDuffee, NMFS, were absent from the meeting. The Massachusetts Division of Marine Fisheries (MDMF) position on the Technical Committee remains vacant.

The Chair acknowledged Steve Rideout who, though now retired, was present in the audience. Ms. Janice Rowan introduced Mr. Bill Archambault, USFWS, who is replacing Mr. Paul Pajak as the Fisheries Supervisor-North.

Mr. Steve Gephard motioned to approve the Minutes from the January 18, 2005 meeting. Mr. Gabe Gries seconded the motion and the Minutes were approved.

2. Program Data Reporting

Ms. Rowan provided summary reporting on program activities:

Atlantic Salmon Stocking A total of 7.8 million Atlantic salmon was stocked this year including: 6.9M unfed fry, 857K fed fry, and 84K two-year smolts. State partners were provided detailed reports for a final review.

Connecticut River Migratory Fish Returns in 2005 Documented counts received by the Coordinator's Office follow: 117,756 American shad, 29,482 sea lamprey, 534 blueback herring, 226 striped bass, 185, Atlantic salmon, 127 gizzard shad, 1 shortnose sturgeon, and 1 alewife.

Mr. Gephard noted that the CTDEP would be updating the day-count of alewife with additional numbers from night-counts. Even so, he did not expect the total number to change dramatically. He also explained that neither the Rainbow nor the Leesville fishways were operational this fall due to uncontrollable circumstances.

There were no fall counts reported from Holyoke though the lift was operational when the river wasn't flooding this fall.

Sea-Run Atlantic Salmon Returns Data As noted above, 185 Atlantic salmon returns were documented in 2005 including two accidental releases from Holyoke, 12 salmon radio-tagged and released by Normandeau Associates as part of the Deerfield River radio telemetry study, and two salmon released in the Westfield River.

In all, 131 salmon were documented at Holyoke, 27 salmon at DSI, 15 salmon at Rainbow, and 12 salmon at Leesville. Almost $\frac{3}{4}$ of the returning salmon are known to be aged 2:2. There were 21 grilse this year and 4 adults of smolt origin.

There was some discussion about the two Holyoke escapees. Mr. Mickey Novak personally observed that both of these unmarked salmon looked to weigh about 10 pounds each. As a result it was inferred that they were aged 2SW.

Mr. McMenemy reported on another grilse observed at both the Turners Falls and Vernon fishways. It was not tagged and presumed to be a third Holyoke escapee. The Technical Committee agreed that this fish should be added to the count bringing the total 2005 Atlantic salmon count to 186 fish. It is unclear if there were more Holyoke escapees. So, it was suggested that the counters at Turners Falls document physical details on observed salmon better in the future. The possibility of installing a night gate at Holyoke to prevent escapes was also mentioned.

Mr. Gephard pointed out that four of the salmon documented at the Leesville fishway were actually netted below the dam rather than trapped at the fishway. Mr. McMenemy also noted that the Wilder fishway was not monitored (except with radio receivers for tagged salmon). As a consequence, actual sea lamprey counts at that fishway might have been higher than reported.

Egg Production Projections The 2005 Atlantic salmon egg production projection is 10.6 million green eggs. This includes 375K kelt eggs, 600K sea run eggs, and 9.6M domestic eggs. Incubation capacity is close to 14M eggs.

3. Fish Culture Subcommittee Update

Mr. Novak provided the following:

Kelts The Richard Cronin National Salmon Station (RCNSS) transferred 56 kelts to the North Attleboro National Fish Hatchery (NANFH) on February 16-17, 2005 (49 are currently alive). The RCNSS had reconditioned 12 of these kelts prior to transfer. The kelts were transferred late because furunculosis was detected in Pool 2 though it was later determined to be due to a contaminated test plate rather than water contaminated by infected fish. It was noted that the kelts at the NANFH were not injected with hormones this year and that the males were not used in the egg bank. In fact, all of the kelt eggs were expected to be fertilized at the White River National Fish Hatchery (WRNFH) with domestic milt. Discussion on what to do with male kelts was delayed until the genetics segment of the agenda.

Sea Runs The RCNSS received 169 sea runs from all four collection facilities in 2005. The process went smoothly though Mr. Novak noted that weekend staff at Holyoke did not always follow the expected protocols which sometimes complicated the effort. He also said that he had only set up one holding tank and chiller at Holyoke this year but would set up two next year, as has been done in the past.

All of the unvaccinated control fish have died of furunculosis, 3 of them died prior to spawning. This is the second year in a row in which the controls have all died of furunculosis.

On October 7, 2005, staff injected 115 sea runs with hormone. All of the injected fish spawned. Two additional females were already ripe on that date absent injection. Eggs from one of the uninjected females have been incubated separately for comparison with injected eggs.

In early October, Mr. McMenemy collected 178 mature parr from the Middle Branch of the Williams River in Vermont. These fish were spawned with sea-run females. There are 156 parr still alive at the RCNSS. Mr. Novak requested a decision from the Technical Committee on what to do with these parr.

Sea run spawning at the RCNSS is completed for the year. Sea run egg production exceeded expectation. The eggs looked great. However, six of the kelts at the RCNSS now are showing signs of fungus on the tail.

The expense of managing the larger run caused the RCNSS to go over budget. However, the deficit was covered by the USFWS Regional Office.

Domestics Mr. Novak also reported that staff at the Roger Reed State Fish Hatchery (RRSFH) were almost finished spawning. Though there were some barren fish, it is expected that they will come quite close to their production projection. The Kensington State Salmon hatchery is also nearly finished with spawning. Mr. Gephard estimated that they would produce 2.9M eggs this year, exceeding their fall projection. The WRNFH is currently holding 3.5M eggs. This is expected to be the peak week for egg production there. They observed more barrens than usual and spawning seems to be about a week late this year.

Smolts Mr. Henry Bouchard reported that the Pittsford National Fish Hatchery (PNFH) is prepared to incubate 500K eggs whenever the WRNFH sends them over. He also noted that partners had helped vaccinate and mark about 80,000 pre-smolts in just three days last month. They are currently holding 100K YOY salmon for stocking in 2007.

Research Mr. Novak reported that the USFWS was developing a ten-year agreement with the University of Massachusetts and the USGS to conduct fish health research into furunculosis and coldwater disease in salmon held in the outdoor raceways at the RCNSS. The Technical Committee previously approved the transfer of 400 domestic salmon from the WRNFH for this purpose.

Thanks Mr. Novak thanked all of the partners for helping out this year. Mr. Ben Letcher thanked Mr. Novak, Mr. Darren Desmarais and Mr. Joe Ravita for helping with the spawning plan and seeing that the spawning process went smoothly at the RCNSS this year.

4. Genetics Subcommittee Update

Mr. Gephard reported that the Subcommittee met this fall and talked about the following:

2005 Spawning Protocol The brood stock mating scheme developed by Mr. Ravita was reviewed and approved. It called for a 1:2 mating scheme (where 2 males were used with each female including, 1 sea run and 1 Williams River mature parr). A separate 1:1 mating scheme (using only sea runs) was used for the egg bank. Use of hormones at the RCNSS is considered to be critical to the sea-run spawning protocol.

Kelts It was concluded that it would not be beneficial (with respect to sea-run crosses) to inject male kelts at the NANFH with hormones because of the difference in the timing of maturation. However, it was noted that injections do work on male kelts and that kelt milt is still considered valuable.

To address this issue, the Subcommittee elected to contact staff at the USFWS Northeast Fishery Center to see if cryopreservation is a viable field option. As a result, Mr. Bill Fletcher proposed to continue some promising research at the WRNFH next year with the prospect of developing a field-ready protocol within a few years. This proposal received strong support from the Technical Committee.

In the mean time, it is recommended that the NANFH staff spawn both male and female kelts and ship the gametes separately to the WRNFH for fertilization.

The general priority for kelts was established to be females over males, 2 SW over 1 SW, and fry origin over hatchery origin smolts. Once spawning is completed this year and preferably within the next three weeks, the Subcommittee has requested that both the RCNSS and the NANFH provide the Coordinator with an inventory to include: the number and sex of kelts (and/or sea runs) on hand, the year class/ages of those kelts (and/or sea runs), the condition of the kelts (and/or sea runs), PIT tag numbers for the fish, station holding capacity, and whether the cost of hormones is included in their budget for next fall and, if not, what that is estimated to be. With that information, the Subcommittee will consider and recommend the best possible genetic approach to transferring and maintaining kelts given the practical realities and recommendations of the hatchery managers.

Had there been any control fish that survived spawning, the Subcommittee recommended that they be released as soon as possible.

Mr. Novak offered to keep up to 100 of the kelts in Pool 1 at the RCNSS for visitor viewing if the other option is to sacrifice any of these fish. He felt he could do this without impacting his station budget.

Parr The Technical Committee considered the disposition of the post spawn mature parr at the RCNSS. Since some will likely smoltify next spring, but some will remain in freshwater for another year before becoming smolts, it was recommended that

they be stocked in suitable rearing habitat that is unstocked. They will be stocked as soon as possible in the Westfield River below the DSI dam.

Genetic Marking Program The PIT tag inventory at the WRNFH is sufficient to cover brood stock tagging needs in 2005 and 2006.

DNA from 2003 adult returns to the Rainbow fishway were screened without matches for marked releases. This was not surprising because there was poor survival to the parr stage among these smolts. The 2004 samples have not been analyzed.

Processing of samples has been delayed because it was discovered that DNA stored in ethanol degrades. This has necessitated changes to the processing protocols and has created a real concern for the viability of backlogged tissue samples. For the time being, future samples can be preserved in ethanol and stored in super-freezers until a better protocol is developed.

Blueback Herring The University of Connecticut collected 100 samples of blueback herring DNA this year. Sample collections were not made in any tributaries. Tributary sampling is planned in 2006. In addition, the USFWS New York Field Office will sample Mowhawk River herring for comparison to Connecticut River samples in 2006.

5. USFWS Program, Funding & Staffing Update

Funding Mr. Archambault reported that the Department of Interior got its FY2006 budget before the beginning of the fiscal year on October 1 which is pretty unusual and helpful. Then he went on to summarize and describe both the past and current state of affairs.

He recalled that the Fisheries deficit at the end of FY2004 was \$2M. As a result, Fisheries planned closures and program cutbacks to deal with the deficit. Nationally, they briefed Congress. This got the attention of the Appropriations Committee. As a consequence, Congress reprogrammed hatchery maintenance funding to operations funding in 2005. The net result was \$1M increase nationally plus an \$885K increase for Fisheries Management Assistance. In 2006, we know that Congress continued the hatchery maintenance reprogramming. However, all the other increases were pass-through funding for specific projects. These include \$885K for the National Fish Habitat Initiative (\$100K in Region 5) and \$200K for the National Fish Passage Program (80% of these funds must be spent on the ground).

The final budget figures are expected in late November. After these numbers are released the field stations will receive their budgets. For the moment, stations are operating at the same funding level as received in 2005. Some stations received staffing cost increases but otherwise no increases are expected. The Regional Director is committed to 2005 production levels in 2006 with few exceptions.

The outstanding problem remaining for the FY2006 budget is how the Federal Government will pay for Hurricane Katrina. There is discussion in the Administration about rescissions ranging from 0.5-3% across the board. Mr. Archambault thought that Fisheries could absorb a 0.5% rescission but that higher rescissions would require program cutbacks. Fisheries recently had to identify construction projects for rescission. Mr. Steve McCormick, USGS, noted that USGS recently participated in a 2.5% rescission exercise.

The FY2007 budget is likely to be flat funded again maybe with small increases to cover uncontrollable cost increases.

Staffing Mr. Archambault said that Fisheries will fill only one vacancy, the Assistant Manager at the WRNFH. The job will be advertised in the next few weeks.

Program Mr. Archambault said that he visited the NANFH last week. He reiterated that he wants to see all of hatcheries fully operational within their budgets. He also explained that lake trout at the Allegheny National Fish Hatchery (ANFH) in Warren, Pennsylvania tested positive for IPN this fall. As a result, the hatchery has been completely de-populated. The lake trout program supports a high priority fishery in Lakes Ontario and Erie. So, other hatcheries were assessed to see if they had the capacity to take lake trout eggs and produce lake trout juveniles. Both the WRNFH and the PNFH have initiated a 2-year lake trout production program to cover the lost production at the ANFH. The current plan is to re-engineer the ANFH facility so that it can exist without threat from IPN in the future. The Freshwater Institute is working with the USFWS on these plans. It is expected to be back in production within one-two years. In the mean time, funding and staffing from the ANFH are being used to supplement the same at both the PNFH and the WRNFH.

Mr. Caleb Slater pointed out that the Merrimack River program had been on the ropes last year but that he had learned of a new office building under construction at the NANFH and new staff working for Joe McKeon in Nashua, New Hampshire. He hoped that some of that new staffing would trickle into this program because it was difficult to accomplish all the fry stocking and field work with the staff cuts at the Coordinator's office. Mr. Archambault said that the vacant hatchery manager position had been filled at the Nashua National Fish Hatchery but that they were still short two FTEs there. He also noted that a new office building was near completion at the NANFH. The project was funded in FY2003. Construction funds are allocated for specific purposes and can't be used to address budget issues. He noted that the Regional Office had also added funding to the RCNSS to address its deficit and that the position currently held by Mr. Desmarais was fully funded for the year and was under consideration for conversion to a permanent position but that this could be impacted by a rescission.

6. Salmon Studies Update

Mr. McMenemy reported on a number of activities:

Deerfield River Radio Telemetry Study Twelve sea-run salmon were radiotagged and released above the Holyoke dam this spring. Four salmon made it to the #2 Dam in the Deerfield River which is the trigger number. If another four salmon make it to the dam next year, fish passage will be required. Tracking of the other salmon revealed that 5 salmon passed Turners Falls, 3 passed Vernon, 3 passed Bellows Falls, and 2 passed the Wilder Dam. The pair that passed Wilder swam into the Ammonoosuc River and was detected between the first and second dams indicating that Woodsville is passable under some conditions. As many as 7 salmon were documented below the GTD dam on the Green River. One salmon migrated to the White River. One salmon was found dead in the lower Deerfield River and another is presumed dead in the Manhan River.

The tagging protocol is expected to be the same next spring. Mr. John Warner agreed to contact Normandeau Associates and TransCanada to make sure that everything is still on track for a continuation of the study. He noted that TransCanada is currently monitoring for kelt outmigration.

Smolt Emigration Estimate Northeast Generation Services, Holyoke Gas and Electric and the Coordinator's Office funded and completed an estimate of the number of smolts migrating to sea from the upper river basin. The 2005 estimate is 81,041 +/- 36,139 smolts. This is the highest unadjusted estimate since the study was initiated.

Mr. Bob Stira was unsure if the study would be funded next year because Northeast Generation Services has just announced that it will be selling the Turners Falls dam and the Northfield Mountain Pumped Storage Facility by the end of 2006.

Index Site Assessments All of the data from index site assessments has not been processed yet. However, Mr. McMenemy reported that he was able to sample all of the Vermont sites for the first time in three years. The YOY seemed smaller than usual, the parr seemed bigger and the numbers looked good. He said that the US Forest Service biologists had seen similar results. Mr. Gephart reported that numbers were also good in Connecticut. Mr. Slater said that he was also able to assess a lot more sites because he had seasonal staff this year and that overall results were okay. Mr. Gries said that it looked like a typical year in New Hampshire with some variability observed in YOY size.

US Atlantic Salmon Assessment Committee The USASAC will be meeting February 27-March 2, 2006 in Gloucester, MA. Mr. McMenemy volunteered to write up the Connecticut River program narrative. He requested that everyone send their index site assessment data to Mr. John Sweka.

7. Fish Passage Subcommittee Update

Mr. Warner provided the following updates:

Holyoke Fish Passage

- Upstream lift modifications complete
- New entrances and lifts appeared to operate well-salmon trap adjustments needed
- New shad trap and truck system functioned well after modifications
- Upstream eelways run this year – awaiting data
- Sturgeon behavior and downstream passage studies ongoing at Conte
- Eel downstream studies at lab not likely to happen due to Conte flume delays
- Eel studies in canal to be re-done this year but high flows are interfering
- Fish and engineering studies failed to prove that the existing rack and bascule can be modified for sturgeon/eel passage – leading to agreement to move towards other solutions (new gate, bypass, racks/screens etc)

There was some discussion about the new shad transfer facilities at Holyoke. Major structural changes, for example to have both lifts dump shad into the tanks are not currently possible. Changes and adjustments to the crowders and the sorting protocol are possible and desired to help limit shad netting and minimize handling stress. Everyone seemed to agree that the new facilities are a vast improvement. Shad can be loaded very quickly. However, some of the folks did not like assistance from the lift crew in loading shad and others did. The first come first serve policy for loading trucks caused scheduling problems once trucks arrived so it would be best to schedule appointments. And, finally it is important to be able to make contact with lift staff prior to leaving to ensure that shad will be available upon arrival. Mr. Stira said that these concerns could be addressed.

Turners Falls Fish Passage

- Re-test of experimental false entrance at Gatehouse successful again in 2005
- Awaiting response from NU on schedule to move forward to construct new entrance
- Current targets proposed by NU are new entrance at Gatehouse ready in 2008, and new passage system at Cabot in 2009 – we have urged an accelerated schedule

DSI/West Springfield – Westfield River

- 1,000+ smolts trapped in power canal this spring-flushed out but need to address problem with owner; Cause may be a failed plastic rack or placement of the trash boom in the middle of the minimum flow smolt slots

Westfield Paper/Russell Paper Dam – Westfield River

- Final comments on application for exemption to restart project filed
- Downstream fish passage, eel passage and bypass flows will be required
- There is also a proposal to tear down the paper mill and build a biomass power plant at the site. The proposed plant will withdraw 800K gallons of river water

and discharge 100K gallons of water contaminated thermally and with various particulates. The CRASC and MDFW commented on the proposal

Deerfield River Project – Deerfield River

- Trigger number of 4 salmon to No. 2 Dam reached in 2005 – If 4 or more reach No. 2 Dam in 2006, TransCanada can be required to install a trapping system

Fiske Mill Dam – Ashuelot River

- Designs for Denil ladder approved
- Construction to have begun this year – delayed

Homestead Woolen Mill/West Swanzey Dam – Ashuelot River

- NHDES feasibility study for dam removal completed (with CT River Office Funding)
- Lowest Cost option - to remove dam
- Town of Swanzey considering taking dam to repair or it will be removed

NH Floods and Dams

- Lower Roberston Hydro and Ashuelot Paper Hydro dams, the 2nd and 3rd dams on the Ashuelot River had embankment breaches – further inspections needed – Algonquin Power to assess and likely repair; These dam owners are already on notice to provide fish passage once fish begin passing the Fiske Mill dam
- Homestead Woolen Mill-West Swanzey Dam – targeted for potential removal sustained damage – uncertain if that changes time line on decision making or action

Lower Eaton Dam – First Branch White River

- Feasibility study on dam removal completed
- Opposition by adjacent landowner has prevented moving forward on removal

East Burke Dam – East Branch Passumpsic

- Initial feasibility study of removal completed
- 15 Mile Falls MEF funding granted to complete historical resource surveys and prepare permits; WHIP funds can be used to remove dams

Fifteen Mile Falls

- Smolt sampler at Moore re-tested in 2005 – awaiting results
- Smolt survival test at McIndoes conducted – high survival but awaiting results

USGEN Assets

- TransCanada is now owner of the Deerfield River and mainstem Connecticut projects including Bellows Falls as the Town of Rockingham option on the project has been voided

Entergy Vermont Yankee Mr. Gries reported that Entergy Vermont Yankee proposed an amendment to their NPDES permit to increase thermal limit of Connecticut River

discharge. The request was approved for the period from June 16 through October 14 annually. To extend the period from May to June, the effect on smolts must be studied for a couple of years. VY has also announced its intention to request an extension of its license for another 20 years.

Fish Counting Mr. Jeff Fryer traveled through the basin this summer and met with agency and power generation professionals. He has developed Fish Tick, automated fish counting software that will dramatically reduce the review time for videotaped passage. Mr. Alex Haro has proposed a pilot study at either the Vernon or Cabot fishways to compare automated with human counts. The study cost is estimated at \$3,500 for lease of the equipment, assistance in set-up and review. Staff from the lab could assist in tweaking the conditions at the site so that they optimize computer counts. Ms. Rowan offered to contact the Northeast Fishery Center to see if they had any funding that could be used for this purpose.

Habitat Restoration Ms. Rowan reported the following projects completed in 2005; all received partial or full funding through the USFWS Connecticut River Coordinator's Office:

Tower Brook Culvert Retrofit in Chesterfield, MA

Lead-MAEOEA Riverways, Town of Chesterfield, Wild and Scenic River Committee, MDFW, USFWS

Raised the tailwater streambed with passable rock step-pools downstream to eliminate perched outlet; Added streambed material in the culvert and planted to stabilize the outer stream bank and access paths

Frees about a mile of habitat benefiting salmon, brook trout and other resident species

DSI Eelpass Retrofit in Westfield, MA

Lead-CRWC, USGS, MDFW, USFWS

Redesigned, installed and repaired eelpass damaged by ice flows

Returned eelpass to operational status

Mr. Slater said that 350 eels were passed this year as opposed to about 500 two years ago. The difference is probably more a function of how many potential routes there are for an eel to take around the dam rather than a reflection of the changes to the eelpass.

Homestead Woolen Mill Feasibility Study in West Swanzey, NH

Lead-NHDES, NHFG, NHDHR, Town of Swanzey, CRWC, American Rivers/NOAA, USFWS

Comprehensive study conducted on the dam and its Ashuelot River surroundings to enable a well-informed and locally-based choice for dam removal or fish passage

Town selection expected by vote in Spring 2006

The remainder of the projects was completed in Connecticut:

Pizzini Dam Removal in East Haddam, CT

Lead-American Rivers, CRWC, CTDEP, CTR/LIS Ecosystem Team, USFWS
Removed the remaining impediment to fish passage on the Eightmile River
Provides salmon, shad, herring and resident species with access to the remaining
4 miles of historic spawning habitat

Mr. Gephard said that this project required tagging and relocation of mussels of special concern.

Nod Brook Culvert Retrofit in Avon, CT

Lead-Farmington River Watershed Association, CTDEP, USFWS
Added baffles to an 85' twin box culvert at the Route 10 crossing
Opened 1.5 miles of stream for salmon, brown trout and resident fish

Mr. Gephard said that the baffles were pre-cast concrete and that they were lag bolted to the inside of one culvert. A low flow lip was installed inside the other culvert to direct flow through the culvert with baffles at low flows. He corrected the benefits bullet (above) as benefiting alewife mostly.

Connecticut Eel "Omnibus"

Lead-CTDEP, USGS, City of Norwich, Farmington River Power Company, Old Saybrook Land Trust, Old Lyme Land Trust, Town of Groton, Beardsley Park Zoo, USFWS
8 projects, including upgrades to existing eelpasses, new projects and improved monitoring – 4 barriers removed
Improved access at Greeneville and Bunnells Pond dams and added eel access upstream of the Hyde Pond and Rainbow dams adds 76 miles of eel access

Mr. Gephard said that the CTDEP is still working on some of these projects. He also reported on a couple of other projects conducted independently by the CTDEP:

Farmington River Habitat Restoration The CTDEP completed a habitat restoration project on the Farmington River in New Hartford, CT. Three log cribs were installed. Partners included the NRCS, MBC, and Farmington River Coordination Committee.

Molson Pond Fishway The Land Trust repaired leaks in the embedded steep pass fishway.

8. Shad Studies Subcommittee Update

Turners Falls Shad Passage Study Mr. Ted Castro-Santos presented results of the shad passage study which indicate that the mock entrance works. It is expected that NGS will begin drawing the conceptuals immediately with a new entrance built and ready for use in 2008, with a fishlift to follow at Cabot in 2009. In the mean time, the

Conte lab is throttling back shad monitoring plans at Turners Falls and looking toward the possibility of longer term studies on shad migration in the whole river including a look at downstream passage issues, repeat spawning, changing ecological conditions, and river flow impacts on passage efficiency.

Shad Transfers Ms. Rowan reported that a total of 1,481 American shad were transferred within the Connecticut River basin this past spring. The Coordinator's Office, CTDEP and USGS transferred 596 shad from the Holyoke dam to the Vernon pool. The NHFG moved 721 shad to the Ashuelot River. The CTDEP moved 84 shad to the Farmington River and 80 shad to the Eightmile River. The CTDEP moved another 63 shad out of basin to the Quinebaug River.

The USGS staff offered to haul more shad to the Vernon Pool again next year if conditions permit. In the mean time, all of their study fish are released in the Cabot Pool.

River Herring Declines Mr. Gephard said that the state of Connecticut was closing the river herring fishery. Mr. Slater said that the Commonwealth of Massachusetts was also discussing a closure. The State of Rhode Island has called a December meeting with Connecticut and Massachusetts to address these common concerns. The thinking is that if the declines continue despite widespread closures, scientists will have to look elsewhere for a cause – potentially involving NOAA and ASMFC in a review of the Atlantic herring fishery bycatch.

9. Other Business

Research Forum The CRASC Research Forum was last held in February in Hadley, MA. Twelve speakers and 82 participants attended. The 3rd Maine Atlantic Salmon Technical Advisory Research Forum is scheduled for January 26, 2006 in Orono, Maine.

Congressional Initiative The CRASC Congressional liaisons traveled to Washington, DC in February. The meetings they had there generated some interest but netted no new funds in 2006.

Fishery Management Plans There has been no progress on the draft sea lamprey management plan. Mr. Scott Craig recently sent state cooperators an American eel survey the results of which will assist him in completing the draft American eel management plan.

Fish and Egg Requests The Technical Committee reviewed and processed about 16 fish and egg requests this year. Only one request to sample blueback herring was denied. All requests for salmon-in-the school programs received blanket approval for the 2005-2006 school year.

CRASC Research Funding Last winter the CRASC charged the Technical Committee with developing proposals and seeking funding for research into the limiting factors in

salmon restoration. Proposals were put forth through the USFWS Region 5 Science Support program and the CTDEP SEP program without positive results.

Another Approach to Research Funding

Mr. Paul Jacobson, Connecticut River Ecological Study Foundation, is developing a proposal for funding research to look at long-term ecological monitoring, both ongoing under-funded and new projects. He expects to be contacting partners as he develops an inventory of existing research for the proposal.

NASCO Update

Mr. Gephard reported that Atlantic salmon harvest quotas in West Greenland (subsistence) and the Faroe Islands (no fishery) are unchanged. Salmon taken in the French St Pierre and Miquelon Island fisheries appear to be of Canadian origin. There is no change in the prefishery abundance. The NASCO research program is still in its developing stages.

Technical Committee Meeting Dates 2006

Future meeting dates will be scheduled after the CRASC schedules their meeting dates later this month.

10. Disposition of Technical Committee Chair

Mr. McMenemy passed the Chair to Mr. Slater. Both were thanked and congratulated.

Attendance

Janice Rowan	USFWS
Jay McMenemy	VTFW
Steve Gephard	CTDEP
Caleb Slater	MDFW
John Warner	USFWS
Bob Stira	NGS
Gabe Gries	NHFG
Ben Letcher	USGS
Julie Zimmerman	USGS
Steve McCormick	USGS
Mickey Novak	USFWS
Bill Archambault	USFWS
Alex Haro	USGS
Henry Bouchard	USFWS
Curt Orvis	USFWS
Tom Halavik	USFWS
Steve Rideout	Retired
Darleen Cutting	USFWS
Darren Desmarais	USFWS
Ted Castro-Santos	USGS
Paul Jacobson	Connecticut River Ecological Study Foundation